

San Francisco 1984

A Guide Book

A CULTURAL TOUR OF SAN FRANCISCO...

Imagine the life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens about town, the future Mark Twain watching a raft make its way from the Bay to Mission Dolores. See Eadweard J. Muybridge in the splendor of a Mission Museum and the sunlight flickered by leaves taking his eyes, the father of the motion picture. Follow Jack London into the Black Cat Cafe to spellbind and enliven his friends. Stay to hear George Sterling, encircled by aesthetes, expound Japanese poetry in the Montgomery Building, room after room alive with the arts, with the artists of the legendary Monkey Block, where the shadow of the pyramid looms. Feel young Isadora Duncan taking in the bay with the fog rolling thru to her uninhibited dance. Imagine live theater in all the neighborhoods. Walk into a Chinese Opera raising funds for democracy in China with Sun Yat-Sen and Chou En Lai, live on stage enacting their struggle for liberty. Watch the broad expanse of pure blue meet a red strip shore, express the soul of Clifford Styll working into the dawn. Witness the stations of the cross, rapturously painted by the veteran Aaron Miller, fulfilling his war vision in the peace of the Church of God in Christ. Hear Kenneth Rexroth, his voice into his heart, improvising an elegy for Dylan Thomas, Thou Shalt Not Kill, an elegy to the young being sacrificed by the system, the state; voice to sax, drum, trumpet and bass in The Cellar, North Beach 1957. Take your seat to Lenny Bruce, working it at the original Hungry I, a storefront of the International Hotel. In dreamtime, see Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady horse around as the three stooges at 3rd and Townsend, Rail Terminal of the West, their laughter rising into the dome, into the railway masque, into the busy sound of workday San Francisco. See them after work make their way to 3rd and Howard to drink a toast to their lives. Hear John Coltrane play A Love Supreme at Both/And jazz club on Divisadero and Janis Joplin air her soul in the Goodman Building, her residence on Geary. Jump with Lew Welch to make his theater workshop at the Straight Theater, the talk endless and true. Hear Jimi Hendrix play our National Anthem for everyone in the freedom of Golden Gate Park, the planetary promise of a green San Francisco. Come circle, Mission Dolores, the Cloud House poetry center for the working class neighborhood, people meeting and sharing their cultures, their tales, their personal musics of being here together, Pacific minded.

Kush



MONTGOMERY BLOCK

COGSWELL MURALS



AARON MILLER MURALS



INTERNATIONAL HOTEL



GOODMAN BUILDING



PROJECT ONE



FOX THEATER



OLD AMERICAN CAN COMPANY



STRAIGHT THEATER



pull out

The Montgomery Block, probably the most historic building in San Francisco — it had been everything from a jail to the state capitol and had housed at one time or another almost all the important writers and artists who have lived in San Francisco — was an ideal studio building. The ceilings were high, the huge windows gave plenty of light. The rents were very cheap. The tenants formed a real community.

Then it was bought by speculators, torn down, and left as a vacant lot for years. Finally on that site was erected what must be the ugliest skyscraper in the world, a kind of hideous billboard which has circumvented the outdoor advertising ordinances to flaunt the name of an institution which as a guardian of credit for construction should also be the guardian of the beauty and integrity and history of the City.

Kenneth Rexroth
San Francisco Magazine

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Variety of population is of the essence of a developed urban civilization. Variety has always been crucial to San Francisco's health as a world city. I have always opposed any effort to curtail that variety.

We need highrises downtown, places where office workers can earn a living. South of Market we need light industry and housing. We also need our artists, especially of the younger aspiring sort. They are part of the soul of this city. If we allow a combination of bureaucratic fascism and unchecked market forces to make it impossible for artists to live and work here, then something vitally humanistic will be lost.

Kevin Starr
San Francisco Examiner

The struggle to save the Goodman Building and other artists' live/work spaces is reminiscent of the efforts of conservationists acting to preserve stands of redwoods, or salt marshes, from destruction at the hands of developers. Indeed, the presence of artists in cities may serve as a prime nutrient for the urban environment in a manner comparable to the role a salt marsh plays as the crucial first link in the food chain of the biological environment. Live/work space for artists is the first link in the chain that nurtures our cultural environment.

Richard Mayer, sculpture
Vice President of
Artists Equity Association, Inc.

There is justified fear that artists, musicians, children, the elderly, blacks, Hispanics, warehousemen, service workers, and all others who are not affluent may soon disappear from this city leaving it a bland and exclusive preserve of young affluent professionals.

San Francisco Neighborhood
Legal Assistance Foundation

If full scale development continues and all low income live/work space for artists is eradicated; if neighborhoods like South of Market, North Beach, Bernal Heights, the Haight Ashbury are mined by real estate speculators, the artistic and creative excitement that has made San Francisco a haven for artists since the days of Jack London will be forced to relocate. In that case, San Francisco will become just another empty, megalopolis thriving on its reputation — full of synthetic, sanitized, replicas of cultural life deemed suitable for tourists and corporations.

If she continues apace and becomes Vice President, I wouldn't be surprised to see Dianne Feinstein scrap the Lincoln monument for a reliable, money making Sheraton. My greatest fear is that we'll all wake up one day not knowing whether or not we're in Houston. We're on the way.

Peter Coyote, actor
Former Chairman
California Arts Council

NORTH BEACH

The "Monkey Block" DEMOLISHED

... THAT YOU WILL

HAIGHT-ASHBURY



The Straight Theater DEMOLISHED



LEGEND:

1. Polk Gulch
2. Chinatown
3. North Beach
4. Nob Hill
5. Union Square
6. Financial District
7. Lombard Corridor
8. Civic Center
9. North of Market
10. South of Market
11. Upper Market
12. Inner Mission
13. Pacific Heights
14. Fishermans Wharf
15. Van Ness Corridor
16. Other Areas

Nearly 5 million dollars in public funds are to be used on the Goodman Building where the amount of affordable housing will be reduced by 20%. This includes funds for Section 8 rent subsidies on 30 units.

On the Gartland site, an empty pit for eight years, the community is told to forget about low income housing because the 30 Section 8 rent subsidies needed to make such a project feasible have been used up. It seems City government has effectively sabotaged 36 units of housing and forced the eviction of the Goodman Group by the manipulation of a federal program designated to promote the availability of low income housing.

The program was called Section 8, the results of the program — a surgically precise exercise in the mutilation of two communities — should be called VIVISECTION 8.

Victor Miller



Aaron Miller Murals

demolished by SF Redevelopment

WESTERN ADDITION

Western Addition & Potrero Hill
not shown on this City map

If you drive past Geary on Van Ness, you can see a chute attached to its intact and valued facade — daily draining away its studios, its inner life and, symbolically, something of the soul of San Francisco

The Goodman Building EVICTED & EVISCERATED

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A haven for painters, poets, actors and assorted seers since 1907, the Goodman Building was the last artists studio-hotel left in San Francisco. For 10 years its residents fought successfully to save it from Redevelopment Agency bulldozers, getting it declared a landmark, grants for its rehabilitation, and producing a feasibility study sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Developer Alan Wofsy, professing to work with us, took all our plans and achievements — then turned on us, and with the Agency's backing got HUD to give him \$5 million to gut the building's interior to convert it into conventional, subsidized "studio" apartments. And evict us.

At the time of our eviction last year, we had financing committed from the State to carry out a non-profit, economically self-reliant development that would have saved its arts use, and not wasted the little that's left of a desperately needed family housing subsidy program.

Warren Hinkle called our struggle "a horror story." Kenneth Rexroth wrote in the SF Bay Guardian that it was "a twin of Kafka's *The Castle*" and our eviction "one of the most unscrupulous deals imaginable — but very easy to imagine if you know 'The Developer Mind.'" Don Turner, past Director of Housing for the State, called it "an incredible perversion of housing policy," adding —

"This is craziness — you are watching madness"

Martha Senger



Marian Gray photo

Center of Phillpino community for decades, home of Kearny Street Workshop, its elderly residents' 10 year resistance to eviction by 4 Seas Development Corporation ended in a bloody eviction July, 1977, as thousands of supporters tried to hold off attacks by mounted S.F. police. Building demolished. Site now an empty lot.

Chris Huie photos



August?

The worst suffering and misery is the sort one encounters in the very heart of progress.

Henry Miller

THE URBAN RENEWAL PROCESS: A process calculated to wage war intrnally against people of the urban environ using state powers without limit or review. Eliminating the uninformed, craftsman and future craftsman, younger generation, forced concentration of the elderly generation and systematically limiting the choices, rights, and privileges of all who might stand in their way. The theory being that this process will improve our way of life while at the same time dignity, job, and home are irretrievably destroyed without mercy by mercenaries with a mission; an army without conscience; naked warfare; a terror unparalleled in modern civilization. I've experienced this in the Western Addition of San Francisco.

L. Jamie Jamerson

bob Hsiang photo

International Hotel EVICTED

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NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE

Working class neighborhoods speculated out of existence. Bohemian quarters existing only in periodicals or pictures past or history books or wax museums. The historic Fillmore, a musical dream to those in their forties, redeveloped into the grassy plains of the Western Addition, a no man's land into 1984. The all too recent exodus of craft cooperatives, small theaters, artist storefronts and non-commercial ventures in general, reflects whose vested interests, whose image to style our likeness, whose designs upon San Francisco become manifest. A heavy urban vibe of alienation has shrouded the city and done in the long-standing "easy going" and "friendly" character of the town that persisted into the 80s. The high rise gentry and their aristocratic life-style of self-indulgent materialism, displacing the genuine cultural diversity of S.F. An insidious silence reigns among those in charge, while the local culture is systematically pressured and forced out. The cultural heritage of the 50s-60s-70s gone in the killings of real estate and ambitious property management firms, zealously pinning, flanking, and dismantling neighborhoods and their small personal businesses for the lord of profit. The spectre of ghettos for the affluent and the poor is the enforced and guarded reality and that image belongs more to the 19th century and its striking imbalances. There is a heartlessness to their dealings in reality, these powers that be. While you think Tony Bennett is singing for the tourist, I left my heart in San Francisco, he really sings the song of those who have stayed here, in defense of local culture and place and are being dispossessed for their effort.

Kush

Fox Theater DEMOLISHED



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American Can Company Snow Studios

SCHEDULED EVICTION

POTRERO HILL

The American Can was once a thriving locus of arts production, but the number of artists and artisans living and working there has declined dramatically. If the few remaining artists are forced to leave because no one is able to determine, rule upon, or legislate the obligations of artists and landlords to each other, then Potrero Hill will lose more of its colorful and neighborly citizens. They will either join the already alarming exodus of artists from San Francisco to the East Bay, or will further overburden the already ailing affordable housing market in the City.

Potrero Hill Newsletter

The struggle of artists to find a place of beginning was of concern to the Pride Foundation when we opened the center at 330 Grove. The building was large enough to allow us not only to operate a community center but also to give local talent a great space for display and work. Lesbian and gay artists were particular recipients of this advantage, much to our satisfaction. The loss of 330 Grove deprived the community of a center, a terrific showcase for local talent and 65 low-income housing units. We have never been able to reconcile ourselves to the fact that a garage was more important than these three things.

Del Dawson
Administrator,
Pride Foundation



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Warehouse South of Market (10th & Howard) that housed artists' studios, a people's computer resource, an alternative school. An important experiment in integrating the aesthetic and the social realms. Evicted in 1980. Broken windows. Still empty.

Project One

EVICTED

SOUTH OF MARKET

Artists have subsidized the reputation of S.F. for decades now. Their reward, in growing numbers of cases, is eviction from the spaces in which they live and create.

The most critical need for the arts today is space to perform and studio work space. Even five years ago in theater and dance there were several affordable choices for a group to perform and communicate a new work. Now, because of development and lack of planning and preservation by the city, elimination of dance performance space is almost complete, and most theaters are homeless or must spend huge amounts for rent and renovation of space, leaving almost nothing for the artists themselves.

Richard Reineccius
Director, Julian Theater

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The Mission



Cogswell College Murals SCHEDULED FOR DEMOLITION

After all this is a world of the survival of the fittest. And what bothers me is that some of the people opposed to this project are trying to protect the weaker members of society from the stronger. This is in conflict with the law of the land.

Lyman Jee, developer
for the Yerba Buena
Center Blocks, 1972

What would Orwell say if he were to see that some of the frightful things he imagined as a result of totalitarian evil could also occur during the ordinary course of democratic benevolence? Or as the 'neutral' result of technological development?

Mark Crispin Miller
"Totalitarianism in our Century"
from 1984 Revisted

Under Justin Herman's leadership the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency became a powerful and aggressive army out to capture as much downtown land as it could: not only the Golden Gateway and the South of Market, but Chinatown, the Tenderloin, and the Port. Under the rubric of "slum clearance" and "blight removal," the Agency turned to systematically sweeping out the poor, with the full backing of the city's power elite.

Chester Hartman
The Transformation
of San Francisco

Some 4000 families were moved out (of the Western Addition A-2 urban renewal project); virtually none of whom was able to move back. The area now consists of highrise apartments and condominiums, new office buildings and churches, a Japanese Cultural and Trade Center and some middle-income housing — all where low-income Black and Japanese families once made their homes.

Chester Hartman

The creeping chic-ism brings with it steeply escalating rents which means that the time people used to devote to their community and their art now must be devoted to paying landlord bills.

Calvin Welch
409 House

Good taste is killing San Francisco!

It's turning great old neighborhoods into decorator consumer ghettos. Union Street, Clement Street, 24th Street have gone. North Beach and South of Market are going. Family housing, workplaces; community centers, schools, theaters, galleries and artists studio spaces are vanishing before the condo boutique cafe and grill. A new class of super consumer will soon own the city of Saint Francis. Good taste will soon triumph. Another victory for the greatest force in America today — greed.

John A. (Jack) Davis

Modern culture is a repressive, police agency.

Gregory Battcock
The New Art

The dominant economic institutions in our cities deliberately work to curtail freedom and reduce autonomy. Cataclysmic forces have obsessive concern for power and profit, and an indifference to more humane interests.

Lewis Mumford
The Urban Project

There's just no reason to go to North Beach anymore. A magic feeling you cannot describe is gone. Just a feeling. All of a sudden you come back and you know it's not there — like a fairy tale — like it was maybe never there to begin with.

A. D. Winans, poet

Prosperity without the soul is nothing.

Jack Micheline, poet

The problem, gentrification of the Mission, grows larger every day. Two months ago, the City joined forces with several developers to put a luxury housing project in our neighborhood. (The Cogswell College site at 26th & Folsom Sts.) The luxury housing that nobody in our area can afford will displace several existing service agencies, destroy a historic mural and occupy land that could otherwise be used for community needs. At the other end of our neighborhood is the old Hamms Brewery (15th & Bryant). Using a federal program with city backing, developers have started construction on a Showplace-Galleria type office building, where designers can peddle their high priced ware. Is this the beginning of other large developments, the extension of downtown? Let's hope not. Let's become active in groups like the North Mission Association, San Francisco Housing & Tenants Council, the Mission Community Coalition, San Francisco Tomorrow, and the Bay Greens. Get active before it's too late.

David Spero
President, North Mission Association



CLOUD HOUSE
on Valencia

A WESTERN ADDITION WORLD VIEW

Black Light Explosion
Dancers, Singers, Preachers,
Mourners, Music, Families, Trees,
Teachers, Spirits, Sons, Daughters,
Prayers, Gurus, People, Unending
Time, Fog City, To be and to be,
Birds, Houses, Food, Ice Cream
What's Happening, Make a Job, Sing
a Song, Play Music, Teach Children,
Make Babies, Plant a Tree, Pray a
Prayer, the Time has come, Sing
it Loud, Dare to, Pray to, It Is,
Touch, Be-In, Earth, Help, Dream,
First, Root, Twig, Skating, Theatre,
Churches, Bowling Rinks, Cafes, Banks
of Fillmore, Bop City, All the Stars
are out tonight, JONESTOWN.

L. Jamie Jamerson

The death of culture is something more than the razing of theaters, the displacement of artisans or blackening of murals. The bulldozer mentality that produces the aesthetics of cement and stucco is at its height in the dismemberment of a way of life by diligent use of the wrecker's ball; whatever the intangible value of communities thereon, the profit yield is less than the land will give up when something ugly is erected. The ruins above are of a place called the Colonial Apts. which while of some note architecturally hardly merits our attention here. I am thinking of TOCA that was both the acronym used for Tenants of the Colonial Apts — a group of people who quite valiantly fought against an illegal eviction for nearly two years, it was also the name of their newsletter that was the work of a remarkable woman Victoria Rojo. In Spanish toca means a number of things, to touch and to play as a musical instrument being the most common. Victoria played the banjo. (how many puns is that now?)

I am myself a great appreciator of that endangered species of thought, wit, that in the long and miserable fight for the Colonial Apts was the binding force that withstood the threats and the hate directed against people in their pursuit of justice. You see what's left of all that. They say its going to be a parking structure. I don't know, it's been torn down for two years. What these are ruins of is incomprehensible, its loss incalculable.

Victor Miller

One of the main reason why San Francisco has been a beacon — or perhaps something more like a flickering candle — for artists all over the world is that it has been a fertile home of underground art and creative breakthroughs that have influenced all avenues of the arts in the past century.

What is the underground? It's the place where most creative ideas begin — the place away from the ravenous eye of the media and away from commercial venues. It's the place where all experimentation and growth can happen.

But many of us realize now that we have taken for granted that this cozy, fertile home would always be here for artists.

Little San Francisco has become the ultimate marketplace and the artists have helped create its "charming ambiance" are forced to leave as real estate prices continue to swell and bloat and everybody angles for their piece of the pie.

And the candle — how much longer can it last? Perhaps it's time we convert it to a torch.

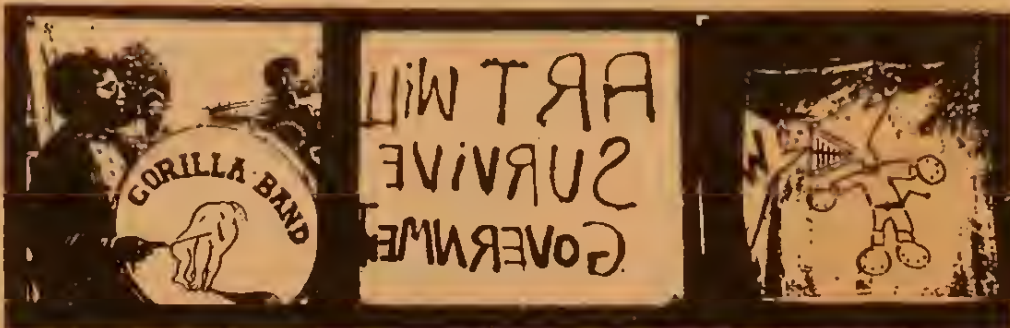
Michele Linfante, playwright

Artists say The City no longer seems to want them around



The most recent era of change is captured eloquently in ... photos, showing the city's skyline from the same vantage point in 1958 and 1983. Behind that dramatic infusion of steel, concrete, and glass lurk more profound changes that threaten to destroy what the city has been for one and a third centuries. The sense of scale is breaking down.... Diversity is disappearing; niches where idiosyncratic residential and commercial life can flourish are becoming hard to find; segregation by neighborhoods, classes, and races is increasing. There is a pervasive sense that much of what is good in San Francisco is on the way out. Things can get pushed only so far before they are irretrievably lost.

Chester Hartman
The Transformation of San Francisco



Goodman Building eviction

Dawn Lewis photo

San Francisco, see your deep self and soul in the cultures that embody you. Here where all the planet has children, provide for the lives to come, for 7 generations hence. San Francisco see your wealth in actual hearts and minds, the true wealth nurtured by your local artists. Respect the beauty they bring to place and the culture they grow, for this culture makes us human.

San Francisco can design itself into anything or grow in any direction, toward the total asphalt or the green promise of being in accord with diversity of cultures present, their being respected and their being able to sustain themselves with space. The vision is of the whole, supporting in place and interest the texture of our cultural heritage that is in fact milleniums old. Nourish the real diversity and be nourished in return by the health that is local culture.

Kush

Thanks to Lee Glickstein and his Blue Ox

SAN FRANCISCO

Sprawled over a history of ghosts
Like a fat gypsy selling her wares
I make my way past
North Beach and the waterfront over the
Hills of Telegraph Hill across the
Once proud Embarcadero down to
Fisherman's Wharf and the nervous odor of
Chinatown circle back past
Mission down to Ocean beach
But alas it is no use
Her children have left for
Sacramento and places further north
The pulse lifeless straining against the
Wounds of refugees hiding their
Faces in the geography of her sores
& blemishes high rises and
Nude encounter parlors
The ghost of the barbary coast
Playland, the Goodman Building, the
Spaghetti Factory, Breen's, and the
El Capitan theatre hang heavy in the air
Lefty O'Doul is dead
Jack Kerouac is dead
Ping Bodie is dead
Jack London Steinbeck Saroyan and the
Black Cat
The city of kings and jazz reduced to
Cold high rise monuments
Her honor the mayor sitting in
City hall dreaming of the
Vice Presidency while the arts
The life line the people are left like
Aging six guns rusting in
A western museum

a.d. winans

Culture didn't end, for us, with the production and consumption of books, paintings, symphonies, films and plays. It didn't even begin there. We understood culture to be the creation of any meeting space among people and culture which, for us, included all the collective symbols of identity and memory: the testimonies of what we are, the prophecies of the imagination, the denunciations of what prevents us from being...

Eduardo Galeano
(exiled Uruguayan writer)
Days and Nights of Life and War

San Francisco takes great pride in its museums, but little pride in its community of artists — what might be said of any city, of any country. What makes for a creative life in a city is the availability of studio and living space for the poor. Paris today has no artists. It has always been a dream of mine that San Francisco might yet be, with the wonderful light we have, a city of great art. But this it will never be unless there is some allowance in the concept of the city's life for la vie Boheme.

Robert Duncan, poet

Of all the cultures that have passed through and made their mark on this peninsula tip that we now call San Francisco, perhaps the most overlooked are the native and wildlife communities. Ohlone Indians lived here with the Tule Elk, Bald Eagle, and Sea Otter communities for thousands of years! Silver salmon and steelhead rainbow trout swam the creeks here where now only the freeways run.

The egret, red-tailed hawk, and raccoon remain to remind us of the other members of the tribe who perhaps only remain in spirit. We would do well to honor these members of a culture more long-standing and ecologically harmonious than our own. Remembrance and appreciation forge the way to protection and return.

Nancy Morita, Director
WILD IN THE CITY